

HA-1437

1881; 1936

First Presbyterian Church
Main Street & Broadway
Bel Air
private

Designed by Bel Air favorite architect, George Archer, the First Presbyterian Church is yet another treatment of the Gothic Revival, the style the 19th century regarded as "the only proper style" for a Christian church. Cruciform, with four steeply pitched gables, a north entrance tower with a broached spire, an entrance porch tucked between the east and south arms, and a small rose window in the west gable, this church is a building at once elegant and cosy, a reverent expression of faith. In comparison to the Emmanuel Episcopal Church diagonally across the intersection, this church seems quintessentially Gothic, while the other has an almost Romanesque earth-bound quality relieved only by the aspiration of the perpendicular windows and the somewhat stubby bell tower. Both are urbane, however, in comparison to the carpenter gothic of Ames Methodist Church or of St. Margaret's Chapel. The church has been added to at various times. It burned in 1936 and was rebuilt using the original blueprints as a guide. The timber truss roof is particularly interesting.

This is the second church built by this congregation. The other is the Greek Revival temple on E. Pennsylvania Avenue.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

First Presbyterian Church

AND/OR COMMON

First Presbyterian Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street and Broadway

1st

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Bel Air

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

—INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

—PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☒ RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

—OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church

Telephone #: 838-5778

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street and Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21014

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: 42

Folio #: 59

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This cross-shaped Gothic Revival Church of coursed stone is one door south of the southwest corner of North Main and West Broadway in the Town of Bel Air, Harford County, Maryland. It was originally in the shape of a Greek cross, but it has grown in a westerly direction as time passed, as the photos of the north and south sides show. The steeply sloped roof is of slate, in alternating rows of fish scale and rectangular slates. The front (east) arm of the cross is flanked on the north by a buttressed bell tower with an attenuated broached spire having slender gable roofed dormers with louvers in four of its eight faces. The spire is topped by a weather vane. There is a pointed arched entrance in the east side of the tower. It has a smooth stone drip mold reaching halfway down the surround and a recessed pair of double panelled oak doors. Another entrance is tucked in between the east and south arms of the cross. It has its own roof which rises to a steep point over the door which is, like its twin in the bell tower, recessed in a pointed-arch surround with a smooth drip mold.

North, east, and south elevations have single pointed arch windows with smooth flush drip mold. The stained glass windows are composed of three lancets topped by a circle. The west elevation, partially obscured by a lower addition, has a small rose window in the gable. The windows in the sides of the cross away from the street are narrower single lancets, one to each side.

Behind the original block (to the west) is a T-shaped addition, also of coursed stone and having a longitudinal gable roof with a hipped roof on the T. The stone work is courser than that of the original building. Like the main building, the T has pointed-arch window and door surrounds with drip molds, also of courser construction. The doors are panelled oak. The windows, while of stained glass, are double hung sash.

Behind (west of) the T is another three bay addition of plastered, cinder block. This addition is hip-roofed and vaguely colonial in style, since two round-headed ventilator dormers break the south slope of the roof. A gable roofed porch on double plain square posts shelters the door in the middle bay of the south elevation. The north elevation has two porches, both with hipped roofs on square posts with balustrades at the sides since they are four steps off the ground. One shelters a door in the west face of the T. The other is in the middle bay of the addition. All windows are four pane casements given an ecclesiastical (and Gothic) look with leaded glass.

Steps to the basement level go down parallel to the north elevation just west of the porch. Two stove chimneys rise, one in the north arm of the T and the other just west of the south arm of the T.

The interior of the sanctuary has been recently remodelled (see #8) and since the church burned in 1936, this is not the original interior anyway, but the Church was rebuilt to the original plans, so it must

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1881: 1936 Architect: George Archer
 BUILDER/ARCHITECT: Smith Bros. of Baltimore

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This charming stone Gothic Revival Church was one of the first architect designed buildings in Bel Air. Indeed, after the 1858 section of the courthouse, it was the first designed by an architect rather than a master builder. It was designed by Bel Air's favorite architect, Harford Countian George Archer, who also designed the Harford National and the First National Bank Buildings. The structure burned on March 11, 1936, with only the stone walls left. The church promptly rebuilt using the original Archer plans. The wooden truss ceiling, while a 1936 copy, is the finest in Town and will be the only one in Town after the old Masonic Temple is demolished to make way for the courthouse addition.

The original church, a Greek Cross structure, was constructed in 1881 by Smith Brothers of Baltimore (formerly of Harford) at a cost of \$6,255. The foundation walls, done in the fall of 1880, had to be rebuilt the following spring. Joshua Wann was superintendent of works.

When the building was restored in 1936, it cost \$33,000, over five times the original cost.

In 1894 the lecture room to the west of the original sanctuary was built, also in stone, at a cost of \$2000. In 1929 a T was built across the back of the lecture room, and this was extended in 1953. In 1960 the wall between the sanctuary and the lecture room was removed and replaced by a folding curtain to double the seating capacity of the sanctuary. At that time the chancel which had been in the west arm of the cross was reoriented. The choir loft was removed and a new organ installed in the chancel. The choir is now behind the relocated pulpit.

In 1967 a new, separate, education building was constructed west of the church.

The Presbyterian congregation is, after the Methodists, the oldest in Bel Air. Itinerant preachers served the area for years, either preaching in the courthouse or in the Union Church in the first Masonic Lodge. In 1852 the Presbyterians organized a congregation led by Mrs. Sophia McHenry, the daughter-in-law of the James McHenry after whom Ft. McHenry was named. Also on the committee were Margaret Bull, mother of Jacob Bull, Bel Air's Master Builder, the Robinson girls who ran a shop at what is now Main and Courtland, James Fulton, and E. Hall Richardson and his mother, Catherine. This small group built their first church on Pennsylvania Avenue. This Greek Temple building, on the National Register of Historic Places, grew to be too small by the late 1870's and, under the leadership of E. Hall Richardson, decided to build the present structure. The former church is now the Odd Fellows Lodge.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harford Democrat
First Presbyterian Church 1852-1952

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property occupies the south part of parcel #478 in the Town of Bel Air, 220' on Main Street

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE _____ COUNTY _____

STATE _____ COUNTY _____

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marilynn Larew, Architectural Historian

30 May 1979

ORGANIZATION

Town of Bel Air

DATE

838-8700

STREET & NUMBER

39 Hickory Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

be reasonably similar. The sanctuary is in the Greek cross with the chancel in the east arm (originally it was in the west arm under the rose window). A recent carved Gothic reredos is against the west wall. The organ pipes obscure the window. The choir and organ are behind the altar rail. The pews curve from a center aisle. They have trefoils at the end.

A fine timber ceiling has large trusses in each arm of the cross with center pendants. Lights depend from the pendants.

At the back of the original church (west) is a curtain wall which opens to enlarge the seating capacity of the sanctuary. This portion of the T was the original Sunday School, called the Lecture Room. It was built in 1894 of stone. In 1929 the T was added. It includes offices, nursery, meeting rooms, and kitchen.

Behind the church to the west is a new, free standing education building built in 1967.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST 21 STATE CIRCLE SHAW HOUSE ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401 HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET Individual Structure Survey Form		SURVEY NUMBER: HA-1437 NEGATIVE FILE NUMBER: UTM REFERENCES: Zone/Easting/Northing U.S.G.S. QUAD. MAP: PRESENT FORMAL NAME: First Presbyterian Church	
COUNTY: Harford TOWN: Bel Air		ORIGINAL FORMAL NAME: Presbyterian Church	
LOCATION: Main & Broadway		PRESENT USE: Church ORIGINAL USE: Church	
COMMON NAME: First Presbyterian Church		ARCHITECT/ENGINEER: George Archer	
FUNCTIONAL TYPE: church		BUILDER/CONTRACTOR: Smith Brothers	
OWNER: Trustees of Presbyterian Church ADDRESS: Main & Broadway Bel Air		PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE: Excellent(x) Good() Fair() Poor()	
ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Yes() No() Restricted(x)		THEME: Architecture STYLE: Gothic Revival	
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local(x) State() National()		DATE BUILT: 1881; 1936 rebuilt	
GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Structural System 1. Foundation: Stone() Brick() Concrete() Concrete Block() 2. Wall Structure A. Wood Frame: Post and Beam() Balloon() coursed B. Wood Bearing Masonry: Brick() Stone(x) Concrete() Concrete Block() C. Iron() D. Steel() E. Other: 3. Wall Covering: Clapboard() Board and Batten() Wood Shingle() Shiplap() Novelty() Stucco() Sheet Metal() Aluminum() Asphalt Shingle() Brick Veneer() Stone Veneer() Bonding Pattern: Other: 4. Roof Structure A. Truss: Wood(x) Iron() Steel() Concrete() B. Other: 5. Roof Covering: Slate(x) Wood Shingle() Asphalt Shingle() Sheet Metal() Built Up() Rolled() Tile() Other: 6. Engineering Structure: 7. Other: Appendages: Porches() Towers(x) Cupolas() Dormers() Chimneys(x) Sheds() Ells(x) Wings() Other: Roof Style: Gable(x) Hip() Shed() Flat() Mansard() Gambrel() Jerkinhead() Saw Tooth() With Monitor() With Bellcast() With Parapet() With False Front() Other: Number of Stories: 1 Number of Bays: 3 Approximate Dimensions: 50' x 175' inc. offices			
THREAT TO STRUCTURE: No Threat(x) Zoning() Roads() Development() Deterioration() Alteration() Other:		LOCAL ATTITUDES: Positive(x) Negative() Mixed() Other:	

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL OR STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Interior: cross shape & W altar to E fine timbered ceiling - one large truss in each arm of cross with center pendant - 2 have lamps from them crossing timbers. Center aisle curving pews W trefoil trefoils in timber ends, too

Exterior: 2 entries S one in angle of cross oak Gothic pointed door in similar stone surround halfway down

N door in bell tower recessed

slate patterned buttress on tower windows

west rose window

"T" has diff coursing, hip & asphalt shingle & pointed arch 4/4 windows

last addition = plaster W leaded casements, hip roof

porchs on sq. posts (3)

in gable roof

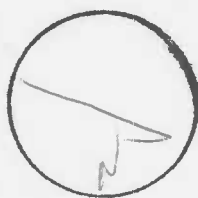
RELATED STRUCTURES: (Describe)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

1. used Masonic Lodge church
2. 1852 church org, led by Mrs. Sophia McHenry (daughter-in-law of James McHenry (Sec of War) - lived at Moumouth until d. 1874 Jacob Bull's mother Margaret; the Robinson girls, James Fulton & E. Hall Richardson & his mother Catherine
3. new church: 1882 George Archer, Arch; Smith Brothers Builders \$8,000
4. 1894 - Sunday school bldg \$2,000
5. church burned March 11, 1936 - restored W a "few minor interior changes" \$33,000
6. 1929 T built across back of lecture room

REFERENCES:

MAP: (Indicate North in Circle)



W Broadway

N Main

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:

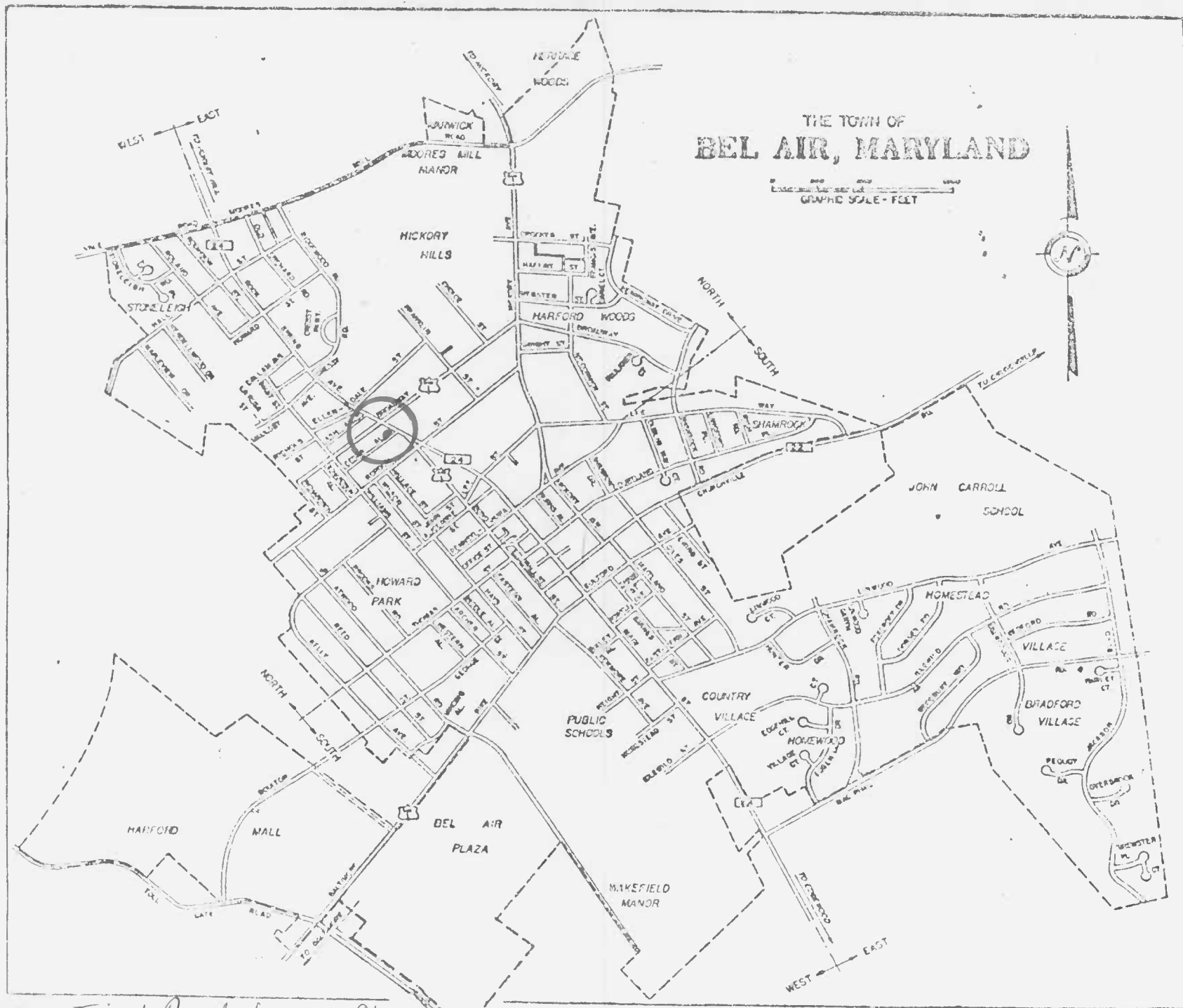
Open Lane() Woodland() Scattered Buildings()
 Moderately Built Up() Densely Built Up()
 Residential(X) Commercial(X)
 Agricultural() Industrial()
 Roadside Strip Development()
 Other:

Marilynn Larew

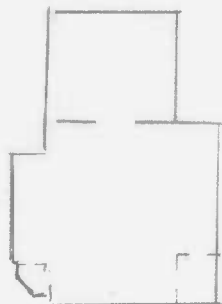
RECORDED BY:
 Town of Bel Air

ORGANIZATION:
 3 October 1979

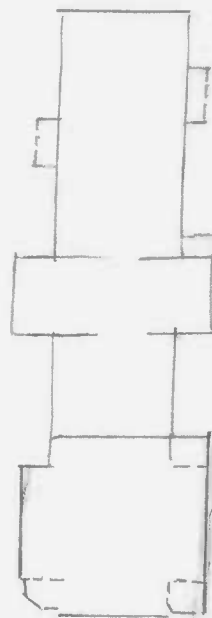
DATE RECORDED:



HA-1437 First Presbyterian Church
in x Broadway



1904



1930

TRACED
FROM
SANBORN MAPS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN Church
MAIN + BROADWAY
BEL AIR

HA-1437

SCALE 1" = 50'









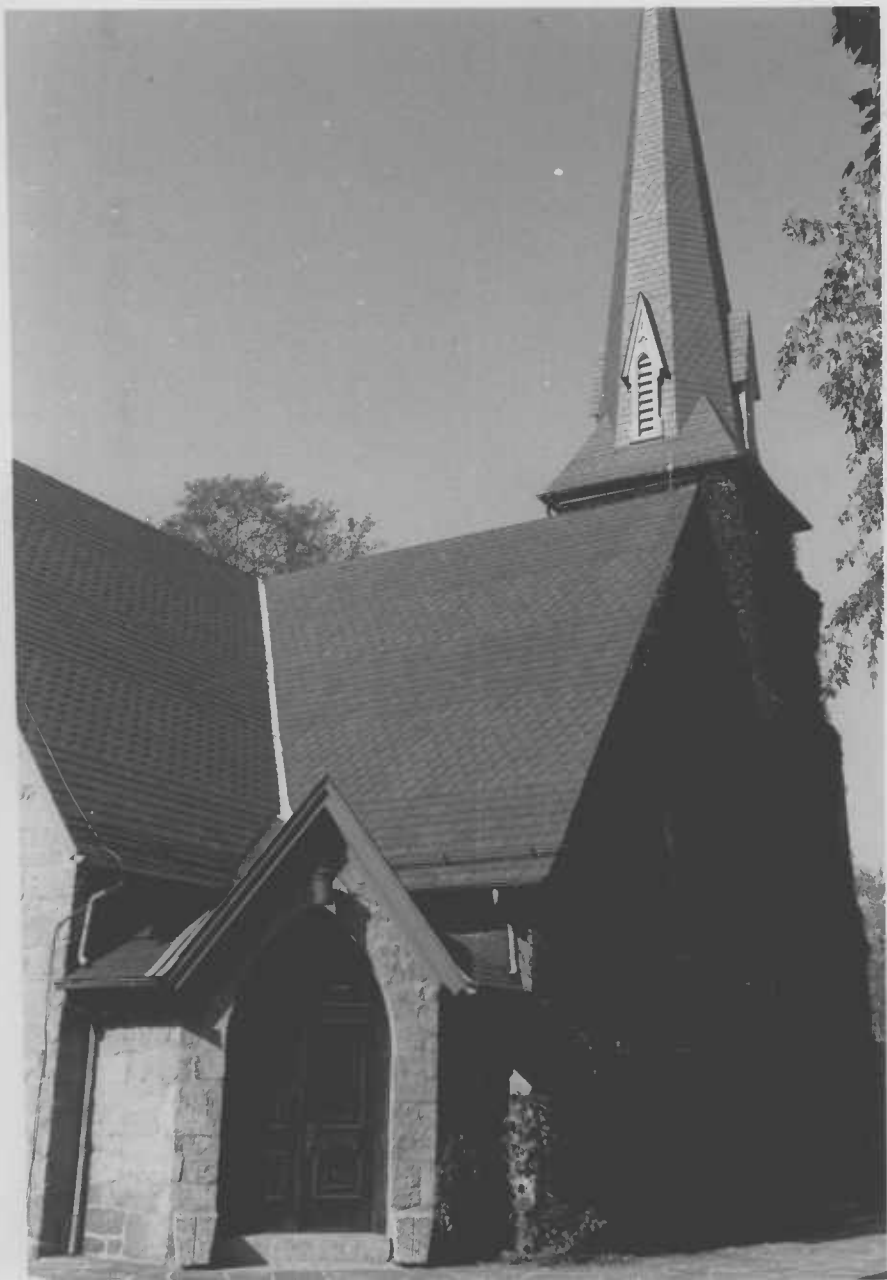






Ht. 1437 1st Presbyterian Church, W. Main & E. Broad Sts.,
Bellevue

Portion of s. elev., w. of crossing
M. Lauen, 1979



SA-1437 1st NW 1/4 Sec 10 T14N R10E S10W
entrance looking NW
M. Larew, 1979



114-1437

1st Presbyterian Church, W. Main + E. Broadway
Bel Air

tower entrance (e. elev.) + n. elev.

M. Lane, 1979